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FROM WHITEHALL TO JEDBURGH: PATRONAGE NETWORKS AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE SCOTTISH BORDERS, 1603 TO 1625*

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ABSTRACT. *When James VI and I arrived in London in 1603, he created a new bedchamber, which he filled with Scottish courtiers. This he positioned, antagonistically as it turned out, between himself and the more English privy chamber. These Scottish courtiers thus had the most intimate access to James, and were able to exercise great influence over the distribution of James's favour. Whilst their importance has been debated within an English context, their significance within James's government in Scotland has not yet been addressed. These Scotsmen became the focus for patronage networks stretching from Whitehall, through the privy council in Edinburgh, to the Scottish regional elites, and helped James retain the co-operation of those elites. Against the background of attempts to gain fuller union, James sought to demonstrate the benefits of regnal union by prosecuting a pacification of crime within the Scottish and English Borders, now rechristened the Middle Shires. Patronage networks from Whitehall to Roxburghshire secured the co-operation of the Scottish Borders elite, whilst acting as conduits for information and advice back to Whitehall. This article will suggest that these relationships were integral to Scottish governmental processes in James's absence, providing a much-needed cohesive force within his fragile new multiple monarchy.*

When James VI and I arrived in London in 1603, he found a court staffed, naturally enough, by Englishmen. In order to retain the services of Elizabeth's able administrators and the loyalty of England's elites, he kept most of the existing English privy councillors, and the English gentlemen of the privy chamber. He was keen also to maintain the co-operation of the Scottish elites and balanced the composition of the privy chamber by introducing into it some Scotsmen. Additionally, in one of the more antagonistic innovations of the regnal union, he instituted a bedchamber, physically positioned between him and the privy

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chamber, which he filled with Scotsmen.¹ The privy chamber was no longer so privy. The privileged Scottish gentlemen and grooms of the bedchamber thus had the closest and most frequent access to James: they embodied the 'point of contact' between monarch and petitioner, and, to the irritation of English members of parliament, great influence over the distribution of significant amounts of patronage.² Whilst these courtiers benefited personally from the lands, offices, titles, monopolies, and patents they could harvest for themselves, their intimate access also enabled them to look after the interests of their kinsmen and allies back home. As a result, these courtiers became the focus of extensive patronage networks that stretched from Whitehall, through the Scottish privy council, to the Scottish landed elite.

These chains of patronage were not, however, one-way conduits. Whilst such networks channelled wealth and titles northwards, courtiers were dependent on their affiliates to maintain their own interests in Scotland in their absence. Similarly, James was reliant on the continuing co-operation of Scotland's landed elite in the implementation of his policies there, and on the information circulating within these networks of the current situation in Scotland. Patron-client networks could facilitate government, creating conduits for the transmission of orders to Scotland, the flow of information back to Whitehall, and securing and rewarding co-operation. They were significant too in the practical administration of James's policies, influencing the staffing of offices at council, court, and regional levels. The interpersonal relationships within such networks were thus crucial to the operation of government within James's fragile new composite monarchy. More than this, they could act as a cohesive force binding together two of its kingdoms, particularly necessary given the tensions that frustrated James's attempts to achieve political union.

These tensions were evident within Scotland as early as 1604 when some Scotsmen voiced concern over their king's departure: a convention of the royal burghs at Haddington lamented they 'regraitt the lois sustenit be Scottis men be his maiesteis absence, and thairfoir to desire [th]at his majeste may remayne in Scotland yeirle ane quarter of the yeir and sie justice administratt'.³ Similarly, where the good burgesses of Edinburgh had been accustomed to regular contact with the Scottish court at Holyrood, James dining occasionally at the house of provost Nicol Uddert, in 1617 these same burgesses complained that James's lack

¹ Neil Cuddy, 'The revival of the entourage: the bedchamber of James I, 1603–1625', in David Starkey, ed., *The English court: from the Wars of the Roses to the civil war* (London, 1987), pp. 173–225; Cuddy, 'Anglo-Scottish union and the court of James I, 1603–1625', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser. 39 (1989), pp. 107–24; Cuddy, 'Reinventing a monarchy: the changing structure and political function of the Stuart court, 1603–38', in Eveline Cruikshanks, ed., *The Stuart courts* (Stroud, 2000), pp. 59–85, at pp. 67–8, 70–5.

² For a discussion of the significance of such access, in a Tudor context but with relevance to the Stuart court, see Geoffrey Elton, 'Tudor government: the points of contact; iii. The court', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser. 26 (1976), pp. 211–28.

³ James D. Marwick, ed., *Records of the Convention of Royal Burghs of Scotland* (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1866–70), II, p. 190. Thanks to Dr Alan MacDonald for this point.

of consultation over his grants of Scottish patents was greatly to their prejudice. Although patronage networks could facilitate communication and co-operation, for those not lucky enough to be part of such networks, James's absence could be keenly resented.⁴

Tensions were also evident in the attitude of some English members of parliament to Scottish courtiers. In 1610, Sir John Holles voiced the feelings of many: 'the Scottish monopolise [James's] princely person, standing like a mountain betwixt the beams of his grace and us', and from 'this inequality proceedeth a twofold unequal distribution of benefits', the English starving outside James's presence. By the 'grace of their place all favours and honours directly or indirectly pass through their hands'.⁵ This was partly a xenophobic reaction no doubt, in 1612 Chamberlain observing that 'here have happened two or three accidents of late very unluckely, that make some boyling twixt the Scottes and our nation'.⁶ Neil Cuddy's article on the antagonism stimulated by the creation of a Scottish-dominated bedchamber links this discontent to wider English resistance to fuller union, as does the work of Jenny Wormald and Keith Brown on the simmering anti-Scottish sentiment at court. Brown's conclusions that there was remarkably little anglicization of Scottish nobles or integration of them into English society demonstrate the underlying friction.⁷ Similarly, the English parliament's debates of 1607 over the naturalization of Scotsmen indicated considerable English resistance to Scottish intrusion.⁸ One needs to look no further than Bruce Galloway's study of the union negotiations from 1603 to 1607 to see how such distrust stymied James's attempts to achieve full union in the parliaments of 1604 and 1607.⁹

James was not alone in Europe in having to govern a newly composite kingdom and attempt to bind its constituent parts more closely.¹⁰ Like the Spanish crown and the Portuguese nobility from 1580, and, from 1587, the Vasa kings of Poland

⁴ M. Wood, R. K. Hannay, and H. Armet, eds., *Extracts from the records of the Burgh of Edinburgh* (9 vols., Edinburgh, 1927–67), II, pp. 160–2, 241.

⁵ Historical Manuscripts Commission (HMC) *Report on the manuscripts of... the duke of Portland: preserved at Welbeck Abbey* (10 vols., London, 1891–1931), IX, p. 113. Cuddy, 'Revival of the entourage', pp. 199–200. John Chamberlain was often caustic about the Scottish presence, recounting John Hoskins's notorious 'Vesperae Sicilanae' speech against the Scottish courtiers of 1614. *The letters of John Chamberlain*, ed. N. E. McClure (2 vols., American Philosophical Society, 1939), I, pp. 510, 538.

⁶ Chamberlain, *Letters*, I, p. 348.

⁷ Cuddy, 'Anglo-Scottish union and the court of James I'; Jenny Wormald, 'O brave new world? The union of England and Scotland in 1603', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 127 (2005), pp. 13–36; idem, 'James VI and I: two kings or one?', *History*, 68 (1983), pp. 187–209; K. M. Brown, 'The Scottish aristocracy, anglicization and the court, 1603–1638', *Historical Journal*, 36 (1993), pp. 543–76, at pp. 544–6, 552–5, 557–8.

⁸ *Journals of the House of Commons, 1547–1626* (London, 1803), I, pp. 1033–4.

⁹ Bruce Galloway, *The union of England and Scotland, 1603–1608* (Edinburgh, 1986). See also Allan I. Macinnes, 'Regal union for Britain, 1603–1638', in Glenn Burgess, ed., *The new British history: founding a modern state, 1603–1715* (London, 1999), pp. 33–64, at pp. 35–8, 45; Brian P. Levack, *The formation of the British state: England, Scotland, and the union, 1603–1707* (Oxford, 1987).

¹⁰ Mark Greengrass, 'Introduction: conquest and coalescence', in Mark Greengrass, ed., *Conquest and coalescence: the shaping of the state in early modern Europe* (London, 1991), pp. 1–24; John Huxtable Elliott,

and the nobles of Lithuania, it was important that James avoided alienating the elites of his kingdoms. Spanish kings used generous patronage to retain the loyalty of provincial elites in the Iberian peninsula, Naples, and Milan. In the newly expanded kingdom of France too, ministers such as Richelieu, Mazarin, and Colbert sought to integrate the newly acquired peripheral provinces, Alsace and Franche-Comte, and the Pays d'État, including Burgundy and Languedoc; they did so by actively promoting the distribution, as Sharon Kettering has shown, of 'royal patronage to secure provincial loyalty and support' amongst the nobility.¹¹ Similarly James, by appointing a preponderance of Scottish courtiers to his family's households in London, was able to retain the co-operation of members of the Scottish elite, in London, and through their connections in Scotland. He made co-operation with him seem attractive, promoting a mutuality of interest. Recent analysis by American historians of the global exercise of power by the United States has relevance here: in seeking to understand why American foreign relations do better in some areas than others, Joseph S. Nye distinguishes between types of power, between 'hard' and 'soft'. Hard power implies coercion, through judicial, economic, or military force, whilst soft power is the art of achieving one's objectives through persuasion, influence, attraction, a mutuality of interests, co-opting rather than coercing. Soft power has the added benefits of being usually a cheaper option than forcibly imposing a government's will on another sovereign state, as well as encouraging long-term co-operation.¹²

This was important in terms of the government of Scotland in James's absence. James may have become a king of England, but in his actions within his former homeland, it was as a king of Scotland that he continued to reign, Scottish sovereignty being retained after regnal union. Whilst James and his English council sent reams of directives north, Scottish government was conducted on a daily basis by a Scottish privy council. Robert Cecil, the earl of Salisbury, may have formulated policy for Scotland, but policy in Edinburgh was implemented by the chancellor, the earl of Dunfermline, and his councillors exercising their own discretion.¹³ The Scottish council was able to resist unpopular or unworkable

'A Europe of composite monarchies', *Past and Present*, 137 (1992), pp. 48–71; Thomas Ertman, *Birth of the Leviathan: building states and regimes in medieval and early modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1997).

¹¹ Elliott, 'A Europe of composite monarchies', pp. 54–6; Edward Opalinski, 'The path towards the commonwealth of the two nations', in Allan I. Macinnes, and Jane Ohlmeyer, eds., *The Stuart kingdoms in the seventeenth century: awkward neighbours* (Dublin, 2002), pp. 49–61, at pp. 57–9; Sharon Kettering, *Patrons, brokers and clients in seventeenth-century France* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 5–11, quotation at p. 6; Kettering, 'Brokerage at the court of Louis XIV', *Historical Journal* 36, 1 (1993), pp. 69–87, at pp. 69, 71–2, 82, 86–7; William Beik, *Absolutism and society in seventeenth-century France: state power and provincial aristocracy in Languedoc* (Cambridge, 1985).

¹² M. J. Braddick, *State formation in early modern England, c. 1550–1700* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 340, 346, 359; Joseph S. Nye, *Soft power: the means to success in world politics* (New York, NY, 2004), pp. 5–11.

¹³ As Julian Goodare observes 'there was still only one privy council. Not only did it not move to London, but no second council for Scottish affairs was established.' Not only was it able to make its own decisions, but that it 'was the government, or at least the daily central government'. Julian Goodare, *The government of Scotland, 1560–1625* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 142, 138.

directives from London and continued making many of its own. The Lithuanian situation had similarities (though not identical): whilst the Lithuanian and Polish parliaments had been merged, Lithuanian offices, administration, and legislation remained separate from those in Poland, in the same way that Scottish administrative and legal systems remained distinct. Both Scotland and Lithuania continued, as John Elliott observes generally of such unions, *aeque principaliter*, 'to be treated as distinct entities, preserving their own laws, *fueros* and privileges'. By allowing Scottish elites some self-government, James avoided alienating them. This could, as Elliott discerns in the Spanish composite monarchy, give 'the most arbitrary and artificial of unions a certain stability and resilience'.¹⁴ In the Iberian peninsula, in the 1630s, previously cordial relations were reversed, however, when Philip IV's minister, Count Olivares, abruptly changed policy towards Portugal, seeking a greater degree of conformity; this alienated some of the Portuguese elite, ultimately resulting in the Portuguese revolt of 1640.¹⁵ In contrast, in 1655, the Lithuanian nobility, careful to protect their considerable rights within the Polish-Lithuanian union resisted moves to sever their alliance in the face of Swedish and Muscovite aggression, protecting the eighty-six-year-old Union of Lublin.¹⁶

James was also having to manage elites in Ireland and Wales. Here, he could draw on the experience of the previous Tudor administrations, though Henry VIII's success in maintaining cordial relationships with the Welsh gentry after the union of 1536 was not replicated by Elizabeth with her reluctant subjects in Ireland.¹⁷ In Wales, the gentry enthusiastically embraced the opportunities created by the introduction of justices of the peace into the new shire system, co-operating with this extension of Tudor authority; Mike Braddick underlines the 'mutualities of interest' with the English crown that encouraged the integration of the Welsh elites into the new administrative structures; and the Welsh gentry were increasingly tightly linked into English society through marriage, education, and their membership of the English parliament. Unlike Scotland, Welsh sovereignty was subsumed within that of the English state, and English law replaced ancient Welsh customs and independent jurisdictions. The Welsh, however, did not feel their identity under pressure from the Tudors; the Welsh view of 'Britain' came, as Gwynfor Jones says, from a 'historical perspective of the British past'. This differed from that of Scotland or Ireland, helping the successful transfer of

¹⁴ Elliott, 'A Europe of composite monarchies', pp. 52–3, 57, 61–2; Opalinski, 'The path towards the commonwealth', pp. 57–8.

¹⁵ Elliott, 'A Europe of composite monarchies', pp. 54–6; Greengrass, 'Introduction: conquest and coalescence', pp. 11–13, 16–17.

¹⁶ Opalinski, 'The path towards the commonwealth', pp. 57–60.

¹⁷ For Wales, see J. Gwynfor Jones, *Early modern Wales, c. 1525–1640* (Basingstoke, 1994); Braddick, *State formation in early modern England*, pp. 347–55; Peter Roberts, 'The English crown, the principality of Wales, and the Council in the Marches, 1534–1641', in Brendan Bradshaw and John Morrill, eds., *The British problem, c. 1534–1707: state formation in the Atlantic archipelago* (Basingstoke, 1996), pp. 118–47. For Ireland, see Ciaran Brady, 'England's defence and Ireland's reform: the dilemma of the Irish viceroys, 1541–1641', in *ibid.*, pp. 89–117.

Welsh allegiance from a Tudor monarch of England, to a Stuart one of the British archipelago.¹⁸

Ireland was more problematic. Henry VIII's declaration of his kingship of Ireland in 1541 was based on his hopes of securing 'the cooperation of existing elites in transforming the basis of political authority in Ireland', the ultimate failure to attain which Braddick attributes to the 'stumbling block' of the Protestant Reformation and the alienation caused by forcible and insensitive reforms.¹⁹ The working relationship that existed between the Catholic Old English elite in the Pale and the English crown was undermined by the stridently Protestant Elizabethan conquest from the 1570s, the Old English increasingly looking towards Gaelic elites for support.²⁰ The Stuart plantation of Ulster was no more successful in achieving the coalescence of the Old English elites with English government; plans to cultivate or 'civilize' Ireland, to persuade, ended in coercion. Both Tudor and Stuart monarchs failed to establish a mutuality of interest with the Irish as they had with the Welsh, and then Scottish, elites, at least under James VI and I. The exercise of 'soft power' amongst the Welsh and Scottish had retained their co-operation, whilst from the 1570s onwards, 'hard power' was to alienate those in Ireland it was necessary to attract. For many historians, the Irish experience of English monarchy was colonial, in contrast to the integration of Welsh elites into Tudor and Stuart government, and in contrast again with the preservation of Scottish sovereignty after 1603.²¹

The relationships maintained between James, his courtiers, the council in Edinburgh, and the Scottish regional elites gave James a means to integrate the Scottish elites into the government of the composite kingdoms. For England, works by such as Pauline Croft, Linda Levy Peck, Peter Seddon, Neil Cuddy, and others have demonstrated the significance of relationships between the members of James's council and household within the conduct of English government.²²

¹⁸ Braddick, *State formation in early modern England*, p. 347; Jones, *Early modern Wales*, pp. 27, 31, 42–6, 78–81, 88–9, 101–3, quotation at p. 43.

¹⁹ Braddick, *State formation in early modern England*, pp. 379–97, quotations at pp. 379–80.

²⁰ Nicholas Canny, 'Irish, Scottish and Welsh responses to centralization, c. 1530–c. 1640: a comparative perspective', in Alexander Grant and Keith J. Stringer, eds., *Uniting the Kingdom? The making of British History* (London, 1995), pp. 147–69, at pp. 150–3.

²¹ For comparisons between Wales and Ireland, see Brendan Bradshaw, 'The Tudor Reformation and Revolution in Wales and Ireland: the origins of the British Problem', in Bradshaw and Morrill, eds., *The British problem*, pp. 39–65, and, with Scotland, Steven G. Ellis, 'Tudor state formation and the shaping of the British Isles', in Steven G. Ellis and Sarah Barber, eds., *Conquest and union: fashioning a British state, 1485–1725* (London, 1995), pp. 40–63; Steven G. Ellis, *Tudor frontiers and noble power: the making of the British state* (Oxford, 1995).

²² Pauline Croft, 'Can a bureaucrat be a favourite? Robert Cecil and the strategies of power', in J. H. Elliott and L. W. B. Brockliss, eds., *The world of the favourite* (London, 1999), pp. 81–95; Cuddy, 'The revival of the entourage'; idem, 'Anglo-Scottish union and the court of James I'; Linda Levy Peck, 'Monopolizing favour: structures of power in the early seventeenth century English court', in Elliott and Brockliss, eds., *The world of the favourite*, pp. 54–70; Linda Levy Peck, *Northampton: patronage and policy at the court of James I* (London, 1982); P. R. Seddon, 'Patronage and officers in the reign of James I' (Ph.D. thesis, Manchester, 1967).

Keith Brown's article on anglicization valuably summarizes the offices held by Scotsmen in James's court and council, but not their involvement in Scottish affairs. Little work yet exists that considers the function of the Scottish courtiers in London within the governance of Scotland.²³ The position of Robert Ker, the earl of Somerset, for instance, has been addressed but solely within the terms of the English court.²⁴ Work is needed on what his years in favour meant for government in Scotland. This article will show how Somerset's patronage network, amongst others, helped James to secure his government in Scotland, the connections within the networks providing channels for patronage and communication, between Whitehall and the Scottish regions. Concentrating on one region, the Scottish Borders, it will demonstrate how these networks facilitated the pacification of crime there from 1603 to 1625. Given that the pacification was undertaken partly in order to further union, it will also consider how such connections can be seen to be acting as a cohesive force within James's fragile new composite monarchy. The co-operation of the elite in the Scottish Borders, as in all Scotland, whether coerced, induced, rewarded, or instinctive, was crucial to the successful imposition of policy, and to the future of the union.²⁵

I

The role of patronage, and patronage networks, in early modern government needs further examination. Patronage, whilst it had the obvious function of doling out lands, offices, titles, monopolies etc., needs to be seen in terms also of what it could achieve for the person distributing it. In James's government, this meant not only securing co-operation, but also that of all those active participants in the patronage networks that stretched to Scotland. Patronage was the playing out of relationships that were mutually beneficial to both patron and client, and that client's client and so on down the chain. Whilst patronage secured and rewarded service, it also underlined the status of the patron, demonstrated his influence, enhanced the bounteousness of his reputation. He was seen to be in a position to make things happen, influence outcomes; it gave him the appearance of power. Contemporarily, this influence was talked of as 'power'. The earl of Somerset used the word himself in writing of what he was able to do, and others used it in reference to him. He was seen to have power to make things happen: thus the Venetian ambassador reported, in 1611, that 'It would seem that he is to dispose of everything' and as a result 'everybody is endeavouring to secure his

²³ Brown, 'Scottish aristocracy', pp. 553–4, 569–70; Maurice Lee, *Great Britain's Solomon: James VI and I in his three kingdoms* (Chicago, IL, 1991) pp. 240–1; Macinnes, 'Regal union for Britain', pp. 49–50.

²⁴ P. R. Seddon, 'Robert Carr, earl of Somerset', *Renaissance and Modern Studies*, 14 (1970), pp. 48–68; Croft, 'Can a bureaucrat', p. 91.

²⁵ Mike Braddick notes the 'willing cooperation of local elites' with the state, including in Scotland, where the mutuality of interest between crown and nobility encouraged their co-operation in the suppression of feuding from the 1590s: *State formation in early modern England*, pp. 337–9, 358–60, quotation at p. 338.

favour'.²⁶ Envious English courtiers certainly equated Somerset's influence over patronage with power.

There is, however, debate over the significance of that power, much of which has centred on whether courtiers exerted any influence on royal policies. For Cuddy, the bedchamber, with its fiscal and legal immunities and constant access to James, formed a counterbalance to the council. Moreover, he concludes that James exploited the role the bedchamber played in 'patronage, administration and politics ... to give himself freedom of action as against the dominance of the Elizabethan council he had inherited. A dual-centred politics, of entourage and council' had emerged, which allowed James to exercise his prerogative more freely. Salisbury's failed attempts to wrestle the bedchamber's powers of patronage for the council, in 1607 and 1608, attests to the contemporary view of courtiers' powers.²⁷ Pauline Croft questions the political influence of favourites, however, pointing to the huge control that councillors, especially Salisbury, continued to exert within policy-making. Certainly Somerset was not remotely in the league of minister-favourites such as Cardinal Richelieu in Louis XIII's government or the count of Olivares at Philip IV's court in Madrid; though Somerset's successor, George Villiers, duke of Buckingham, Linda Levy Peck concludes, 'was the only English or Scottish favourite to achieve the power' of these continental figures.²⁸ But to see power here only in terms of policy-making is to obscure the influence that the courtiers could exert in the *processing* of any such policy beyond the bounds of Whitehall. Moreover, to see government only in terms of the force it can bring to bear on society, the exercise of 'hard power', fails to appreciate the other means through which a government can achieve its objectives. Patronage was largely the use of 'soft power', since it helped to attract, to persuade co-operation with government (though the removal of favour, and the negative influence that courtiers could exert against an enemy were perhaps 'harder'). Finally, in an age of personal monarchy and of less institutionally developed government, we need to see government in terms of the interaction of the people participating within it, as well as its institutions: as William Beik concludes of seventeenth-century France, networks of clientage provided a 'system of government in which networks of personal loyalty and institutional lines of authority were interconnected, affecting the very nature of political power', calling 'into question the centrality of institutions *per se*'; the focus is now on the personal ties 'which provided "substance" to the "form" of the institutions'.²⁹

The Scottish courtiers were able to exert such influence because their dominance of the bedchamber gave them almost unrivalled access to James.³⁰ This

²⁶ National Archives of Scotland (NAS), Lothian papers, GD40/2/13, fos. 2, 20; *Calendar of state papers ... Venice, 1603-1675 (CSP Ven)*, ed. H. F. Brown et al. (38 vols., London, 1864-1947), xii, pp. 135-6.

²⁷ Cuddy, 'Reinventing the monarchy', pp. 72-3.

²⁸ Croft, 'Can a bureaucrat', pp. 90-1; Peck, 'Monopolizing favour', p. 59.

²⁹ Beik, *Absolutism and society*, pp. 15-16.

³⁰ For Kevin Sharpe, 'access to and influence at court was the first goal of all political ambition': 'Crown, parliament and locality: government and communication in early Stuart England', *English*

meant that they could judge the most propitious moment to present suits to their temperamental master. In 1615, Murray of Elibank asked one gentleman, John Murray of Lochmaben, to 'present [a letter] when the kingis maiestie salbe found in gud humour and at lasour to read it', whilst in 1614 the Scottish chancellor, the earl of Dunfermline, observed to Lochmaben that, if he that was 'daylie attendentis, domestic, and hamelie with his Sacred Majesty can not move his Majesty', then nothing could.³¹ On a more quantifiable level, they were able to obtain the royal signature to the warrants and orders they presented to their king.³² Cuddy estimates that one sixth of signatures to signet warrants were procured by the bedchamber in 1614 – and that this figure had risen, by 1624, to nearly a half. Moreover, one of the bedchamber held the privy purse which gave him access to a stamp of the king's signature. This office was held first by the Scottish earl of Dunbar, then by his proxy, and after his death, in 1611, by another borderer, Lochmaben, later earl of Annandale.³³ The case of Dunbar also concerned a figure that exerted influence in James's household and within his councils. Until the appointment of George Villiers in 1615 to the bedchamber, Scotsmen outnumbered English by eight to one; there were no English grooms of the bedchamber until 1617.³⁴

The connections established through patronage were visible in the patronage networks focused on these courtiers. Whilst James was the chief fount of all patronage, the courtiers formed a second horizontal layer in a pyramid of patron–client relationships that widened through those courtiers' own patronage networks. These relationships, oiled by the material benefits of patronage, were, however, underwritten by more complex obligations and loyalties associated with kinship and friendship, clientage and deference, and the legitimization of the patron's authority. Like all early modern office-holders, his credibility depended, as Braddick surmises, on the 'reception of his performance', and his upholding of 'values of honour, degree and dignity'. On a lighter level, he had to look the part, the need for costly clothing an impediment to impecunious Scottish suitors at court. But more seriously, if the patron was not seen to be fulfilling his side of the bargain, the client was not bound to provide the service; the patron's status rested partly on the acknowledgement of his superiority by the client, and this in turn rested on the patron's ability to secure what was promised. Most historians now emphasize the reciprocity of the patron–client relationship.³⁵ The rhetoric of

Historical Review, 101 (1986), pp. 321–50, quotation at p. 324; Peck, 'Monopolizing favour', p. 63; Cuddy, 'Reinventing a monarchy', p. 71–2.

³¹ National Library of Scotland (NLS), Denmilne, Adv. MS 33.1.1, vol. 6, fo. 52, vol. 5, fo. 143.

³² Elton, 'Tudor government: the points of contact', pp. 216–17.

³³ Cuddy, 'Revival of the entourage', pp. 177, 183, 185, 187. Dunbar's tenure as keeper of the privy purse, May 1603–Apr. 1605, The National Archives (TNA), E351/2792.

³⁴ Cuddy, 'Revival of the entourage', pp. 86 n. 22, 190, 206–8.

³⁵ Kettering, *Patrons, brokers and clients*, pp. 16–18; Braddick, *State formation in early modern England*, pp. 87–8; M. J. Braddick, 'Administrative performance: the representation of political authority in early modern England', in M. J. Braddick and J. Walter, eds., *Negotiating power in early modern society: order, hierarchy and subordination in Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 166–87, at p. 171.

patronage and clientage was characterized by the recognition of obligations, in phrases such as being 'bound to your kindnes and guid will'. Here, the writer further recognized that the favour was 'done to a freind, to ane kinnisman'; though not a kinsman, he was reminding the courtier of the mutually beneficial obligations associated with kinship that were being replicated within this patron-client relationship.³⁶ The highest office-holders in the land, near the apex of a pyramid of patronage, were connected by these reciprocal obligations to the broader stratus of officials implementing James's policies in the regions.

Patronage networks had a number of different functions. On a political level, they allowed influential courtiers and councillors to build up a network of office-holders, a political clientele, that helped them to fulfil their duties, and underlined their status. William Beik describes the 'networks of clientèles' maintained by Richelieu, Mazarin, and Colbert in Languedoc, where they placed their allies in influential offices. Significantly, those networks did not long outlast the downfall of their chief patron, office-holders ousted as the new minister-favourite's network was established.³⁷ In contrast, as we shall see, Somerset's Scottish network of Kers and Murrays, evident in the placement of his kin in positions of considerable authority in Edinburgh and the Borders, did withstand its patron's removal, secured by 1615 through these officials' own patronage networks. As discussed, these networks staffed offices and channelled rewards, thus participating in the implementation of policy. They encouraged the co-operation of governing elites, to tie these elites into the government of the three kingdoms linking, as Beik observes, 'national client systems and locally-based power centres'. One benefit was the social cohesion encouraged by these links that cut down through the socio-economic strata, but less beneficially, close personal ties, often of kinship, could reinforce political factions.³⁸ Crucially, networks also provided conduits for communication, information, and advice. In a typical phrase, in 1604 James asked Lord Spynie to continue 'giving your best advise in our affaris'. As Kevin Sharpe puts it, such two-way communication was 'the binding thread of government', which a king blocked at his peril.³⁹

II

In 1603 one of James's preoccupations was to establish a fuller union between Scotland and England than the merely dynastic union; a 'perfect union', in which both England and Scotland would benefit since, in his memorable phrase, 'Two great snow-balls put together, make the one greater.'⁴⁰ James targeted one particular area to exemplify the benefits of union, the previously separate English

³⁶ NLS, Denmilne, Adv. MS 33.1.1, vol. 5, fo. 103.

³⁷ Kettering, *Patrons, brokers and clients*, pp. 3–5, 7, 11; Beik, *Absolutism and society*, pp. 15–16, 234–44.

³⁸ Peck, 'Monopolizing favour', pp. 56, 62; Beik, *Absolutism and society*, pp. 233, 239.

³⁹ NLS, Denmilne, Adv. MS 33.1.1, vol. 1, fo. 12; Sharpe, 'Crown, parliament and locality', pp. 336, 339–40, 346, quotation at p. 324.

⁴⁰ King James VI and I, *Political writings*, ed. Johann P. Sommerville (Cambridge, 1994), p. 177.

and Scottish Borders, rechristened in 1603 the 'Middle Shires'.⁴¹ In 1598, James had prophesied (over-optimistically) in *Basilikon Doron*, that on his succession to the English throne, and the disappearance of fraught Anglo-Scottish relations, the Borders 'will be the midst of the Ile, and so as easily ruled as any part thereof'.⁴² As a novel cross-border entity, these shires were intended to represent the harmonious heart of the newly unified kingdoms, the composite British monarchy in microcosm. To ensure this, from 1605 James instituted a pacification of crime there in which cross-border co-operation was meant to show the new working relationships within the regnal union. In doing so, he was to employ the patronage networks headed by Somerset and other Border courtiers to secure the co-operation of the local nobility and lairds in the pacification.⁴³

Successive Tudor and Stuart kings sought to reduce their several borderlands to civility and co-operation, with varying degrees of success. These apparently turbulent marcher societies, characterized, it was thought, by the semi-independent jurisdictions of clan-based, militarized lordships, were increasingly viewed as obstructive, first to the extension of Tudor crown authority, and then to the integration of the composite kingdoms under James VI and I. Steven Ellis detects a sea-change in Tudor policy in the 1530s, in which Henry VIII made inappropriate attempts to impose a centralized style of government, more suited to the English lowlands, on the Welsh marches, the Irish Pale, and the English Borders. The marcher lordships of Wales found as many as 5,000 people removed from their numbers under Henry's ruthless agent, Rowland Lee, during his presidency of the Council in the Marches in the years surrounding the Anglo-Welsh union of 1536.⁴⁴ Here, however, the careful inclusion of the Welsh gentry in the intensification of Tudor government precluded the alienation felt, in the English north initially, and in Ireland in the long term. In the English Borders after 1603, James's pacification was achieved through the co-operation of the local gentry for whom it was politically advantageous.⁴⁵ Despite the potential for good relations provided by the Old English elite in the Irish Pale, the alienation of some caused by Henry's suppression of the earl of Kildare, and the introduction of English viceroys, led to the break-out of rebellions in 1568–73 and 1579–83, and culminated in the Nine Years War from 1593.⁴⁶ The viceroyship was an unenviable position, having to reconcile Old English interests with the need for

⁴¹ *The register of the privy council of Scotland, 1545–1625* (RPCS), ed. J. Buron and D. Masson (13 vols., Edinburgh, 1877–98), vi, pp. 560–1.

⁴² James, *Political writings*, p. 25.

⁴³ Michael B. Wasser, 'The pacification of the Scottish Borders, 1603–1612' (M.A. diss., McGill, 1986); Jared Sizer, 'Law and disorder in the "Middle Shires" of Great Britain, 1603–1625' (Ph.D. thesis, Cambridge, 2001); Anna Groundwater, *The Scottish Middle March, 1573 to 1625: power, kinship, allegiance* (Woodbridge, 2010), ch. 7.

⁴⁴ Ellis, *Tudor frontiers*, pp. 5, 16, 254–5, 267–70; Jones, *Early modern Wales*, pp. 58–70.

⁴⁵ Sheldon J. Watts and Susan J. Watts, *From Border to Middle Shire Northumberland, 1586–1625* (Leicester, 1975); R. T. Spence, 'The pacification of the Cumberland Borders, 1593–1628', *Northern History*, 13 (1977), pp. 59–160; Maureen M. Meikle, *A British frontier? Lairds and gentlemen in the eastern Borders, 1540–1603* (East Linton, 2004); Diana Newton, *North-East England, 1569–1625: governance, culture and identity* (Woodbridge, 2006).

⁴⁶ Ellis, 'Tudor state formation', p. 61.

administrative and judicial reforms, and the defence of the border that the Pale constituted between England and Gaelic Ireland, and Catholic Europe.⁴⁷ Nicholas Canny condemns James for allowing his officials to exacerbate this alienation leaving a festering sore for his son.⁴⁸

James could not be accused of similar neglect in the Scottish Borders. In 1605, he appointed two separate commissions, one for each side of the border, to co-ordinate the pacification of crime, the principal Scottish commissioner being Sir Gideon Murray of Elibank. The commissioners were assisted by a mounted guard, the Scottish guard captained by Sir William Cranstoun. Subsequent indemnities to both commissioners and guards show how fiercely they undertook their duties. In 1606 James, thinking progress was too slow, appointed his fearsome agent George Home, the earl of Dunbar, as lieutenant of the whole Middle Shires. Crucially, Dunbar was the only person, apart from James himself, ever to have jurisdiction on both sides of the border. His vigorous suppression of crime, in order to underpin the regnal union, replicated that of Rowland Lee in the Welsh marches, which the Anglo-Welsh union of 1536 had helped to facilitate.

As one of James's most trusted Scottish courtiers, Dunbar's career exemplified the way in which government policy, conceived in London, could be communicated to, and executed, within the Scottish Borders. After 1603, he remained lord treasurer of Scotland whilst, in England, James made him chancellor of the exchequer until 1606, master of the great wardrobe, gentleman of the robes and keeper of the privy purse, thus holding office in both the royal household and the English and Scottish councils.⁴⁹ Following his Borders posting, Dunbar was careful to sustain his connections, returning regularly to hunt with James and maintaining an intimate correspondence with Salisbury.⁵⁰ His activities in the Borders remained closely linked into the central governments of the two kingdoms. He was eminently suitable for a Borders lieutenancy, as a member of the powerful Home kindred of the eastern Borders, and having the vested interests and authority of a landowner on both sides of the border. In his combination of offices and connections, Dunbar represented the way government was conducted at the heart of the composite kingdom. Contemporarily, Dunbar was widely credited for the successful suppression of crime in the region, even his rival, Dunfermline, writing to James with flowery approval.⁵¹ The last old style cross-border raid into north Northumberland, in 1611, was very much an exception. Exhausted by the constant travel necessary to maintain his links with London, Dunbar died that year. The Borders, however, did not cease to be viewed as an

⁴⁷ Brady, 'England's defence and Ireland's reforms', pp. 89–90, 92, 99–102.

⁴⁸ Canny, 'Responses to centralization', pp. 163, 169.

⁴⁹ HMC, *The manuscripts of the marquess of Salisbury* (24 vols., London, 1883–1970), xviii, p. 371; Cuddy, 'Revival of the entourage', pp. 175, 187, 189, 198; Jared Sizer, 'The good of this service consists in absolute secrecy: the earl of Dunbar, Scotland and the Border, 1603–1611', *Canadian Journal of History*, 36 (2001), pp. 229–57.

⁵⁰ HMC *Salisbury*, xvi, p. 78, xvii, pp. 223–4, 591, xix, pp. 31, 44, 164, 184, 192, 207–8, 209–10, 247, 254, 315, 350–1.

⁵¹ NLS, Denmilne, Adv. MS 33.1.1, vol. 3, fo. 23.

area of concern and sporadic government action continued until the mid-1620s. But no one after Dunbar was to replicate his stature as a bridge between the governments of the two kingdoms in this cross-border region.

In terms, however, of government within the Scottish Borders, the continuation of effective links was discernible from Whitehall to shire level. Elibank, who came closest to Dunbar's authority within the Scottish council and the Borders, remained commissioner until 1617, whilst being appointed, in 1610, a JP for Selkirkshire and a privy councillor, and, in 1612, deputy treasurer until his death in 1621.⁵² The concentration of such local and national powers within his hands was to make Elibank a significant governmental force in the Borders and a vital link to government in Edinburgh. Indeed, he embodied the connection between the two. Elibank was well remunerated for his service: he accumulated lands in Peeblesshire and near Melrose, and a pension continued posthumously to his son's benefit. Such rewards illustrated how James used grants of land and offices to secure the service of local elites in his increasingly intensified government within the Scottish regions.

This was true not just of those appointed to border-specific offices: James also achieved the co-operation of prominent landholders in the Borders, who might have felt their existing authority threatened by this forceful pacification.⁵³ Two key figures were Robert Ker of Cessford, the former Middle March warden, created Lord Roxburgh in 1600, and Walter Scott of Buccleuch, created Lord Buccleuch in 1606. Both had been repeatedly accused by the English of cross-border crime prior to 1603; now both became central figures within James's government, at local and national levels. The Buccleuchs especially were involved with the pacification, Lord Buccleuch receiving a council citation in 1608 for his efforts. His son, also Walter, was one of the triumvir commissioners of the Middle Shires appointed in 1622 to reinvigorate judicial efforts within the more troublesome dales, where he had large landholdings. Additionally, the government was able to utilize the informal authority that Buccleuch and Roxburgh held as leaders of the huge Scott and Ker kindreds respectively, and as landlords with private jurisdictions. Buccleuch's commission in 1622 specifically referred to the 'power and frendship' that he had in the region.⁵⁴ Their co-operation was rewarded by their appointment to the offices of councillor and JP, extensive grants of land and, finally, an earldom apiece. James's use of patronage was to secure Buccleuch and Roxburgh's long-term service in the pacification and on

⁵² *RPCS*, ix, pp. 54, 75–6, 523, xi, pp. 11–12.

⁵³ As elsewhere in Scotland, owners of baronies held private jurisdiction within them and did challenge some external summonses, though the commissioners' powers usually superseded these. Also, as elsewhere, the sheriffs of the Borders shires held heritable jurisdictions, though those of Berwick and Selkirk surrendered them before 1625. Generally, however, the holders of these jurisdictions did not use them to obstruct the pacification, their extra judicial power usually being used co-operatively, they themselves members of the wider patronage networks. *RPCS*, 2nd ser., i, p. 659; Julian Goodare, *State and society in early modern Scotland* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 89–90.

⁵⁴ *RPCS*, xii, pp. 675–9.

the Scottish council, benefiting that institution with the local knowledge and authority that they could provide.

Such displays of patronage had become even more important as James moved south in 1603, when he needed to retain the loyalty of his landed elite in the Borders within the pacification. Roxburgh accompanied James to London in 1603 and, in early 1614, his marriage to Jane Drummond, the chief lady of the queen's household, was celebrated at Somerset House with feasting and masques paid for by the queen.⁵⁵ Jane had been the recipient of a large pension of £500 from 1610 and continued in her household until 1617. Roxburgh's rich clothing in 1610 suggests how his life had changed; no longer the protective leather jerkin but a 'jerkin all of lace' and a 'doublet of cloth of gold'.⁵⁶ Despite Roxburgh's successes, he never achieved high office in the English court, failing in 1616 to secure the lord chamberlaincy of Prince Charles's household. In 1619, however, he was appointed to the prince's Scottish advisory council and attended the council fairly frequently when in Scotland.⁵⁷ Roxburgh's life, divided among London, Holyrood, and his increasingly comfortable house near Kelso, epitomized the way in which direct links could be maintained between James's court, his Scottish council, and government in the Borders.

James's success in rewarding and retaining the loyalty and co-operation of his borderer elite had wider implications for his plans for union. At a basic level, this elite co-operated in the suppression of crime in the area that was meant to exemplify union. They also co-operated within James's increasingly institutionalized government as sheriffs, JPs, and Middle Shires commissioners and some as councillors. This was of great significance after 1603, when the Scottish council governed on a day-to-day basis in James's absence. As Elliott observes of the Milanese or Neapolitan elites *vis-à-vis* the crown of Aragon, the inclusion of the provincial elites in government could underpin any union, diffusing any opposition.⁵⁸ If this was true of the non-contiguous regions of the various Spanish territories, how much more secure would the careful treatment of the Scottish elite in the Scottish Borders make the regnal union?

III

The relationships between Scottish courtiers, in particular the Borderers Somerset, Murray of Lochmaben, and Sir Robert Ker of Ancrum, and the Scottish Borders elite provided a crucial link between the formation and execution of government policy. These courtiers became the focus for patronage networks that extended from Whitehall into the outlying uplands of the region: personal contacts with their allies on the Scottish council, Murray of Elibank,

⁵⁵ Chamberlain, *Letters*, I, pp. 487, 504, 507; National Register of Archives Scotland (NRAS), Roxburgh, 1100/1611, fo. 2. ⁵⁶ NRAS 1100/1011, 1100/1277; Chamberlain, *Letters*, II, p. 102.

⁵⁷ Chamberlain, *Letters*, II, p. 45; *RPC*, XII, pp. 59–60.

⁵⁸ Elliott, 'A Europe of composite monarchies', p. 56.

Walter Scott, Lord Buccleuch, and Robert Ker of Oxnam, and their borderer kin and allies, the Murrays, the Scotts, and the Kers, provided useful conduits of influence, obligation, and communication. From 1605, these mechanisms facilitated and rewarded the imposition of the pacification.

Chief amongst these networks was that headed by James's favourite Somerset from around 1608. Somerset's upbringing and family were in Roxburghshire, and it was predominantly to there that his Scottish network extended. His half-brother was Sir Andrew Ker of Ferniehirst, a prominent landowner near Jedburgh, and the leader of a rival branch of Kers to that headed by the new Lord Roxburgh. His was an example of a career that burned too bright, crashing into disgrace in 1615 within two years of its peak. For all its temporary nature, however, a study of Somerset's links with his homeland shows the significance of the influence he held for himself, his alliance, and for James's government in the Scottish Borders. The relationships within Somerset's patronage network suggest the workings of James's government, from London to Roxburghshire, and how James could encourage service in other Scottish regions.

When Ker went south to court, by 1604, the Ferniehirst Kers were experiencing severe financial problems and were overshadowed by their rival Ker cousin, Lord Roxburgh. The hopes of the house of Ferniehirst were pinned on their attractive, if not intellectual, kinsman. Ker was the protégé of Dunbar, a distant kinsman and fellow borderer, who facilitated his appointment as groom of the bedchamber from 1604 to 1607, when he was promoted to gentleman. In 1608, Ker of Ancrum, another kinsman, wrote hopefully to Ferniehirst from Paris that he had heard gladly of Robert's 'preferment' but would be 'gladder if it shall please god to make him an instrument of what his duty should oblige him to. I know the trust in his power or that can do alike with extraordinary or ordinary reward.'⁵⁹ Both Ker and his family were alert to his potential.

Ker was also aware of his obligation to his family, in 1610 bemoaning his lack of progress on their behalf: his nephew, Ferniehirst's heir, Andrew Ker of Oxnam, had attempted unsuccessfully to find favour at court.

Sir, your sonne hes returned be my perswasione, as findinge yt tyme barren of hopes, and friendes, My bussines at this tyme, could not suffer me to sho my kyndes to him, nor spaire anie of my little power from thame, so as I wished him ... to retyre himselfe home and attend a better occasione, when I should have more power of my selfe ...

[I] desyres you to Beleive thair is no Brother hes more good naturall affectione to your personnes, nor wishes better to your fortune, And ye good of your house (In which I have a deir interest).⁶⁰

Ker's execrable handwriting does not obscure the significance of his message to Ferniehirst. In 1610, the courtier did not feel himself secure enough to push his kindred's suits, but his expectation of power was also apparent. This belief proved to have foundation. After Dunbar's death in 1611, the Venetian ambassador

⁵⁹ NAS, Lothian papers, GD40/2/13, fo. 2.

⁶⁰ Ibid., GD40/2/12, fo. 20.

observed that Ker appeared to have stepped into his mentor's shoes, distributing patronage and favour.⁶¹ Shortly afterwards, Ker became Viscount Rochester and a privy councillor. By July 1612, following Salisbury's death, he was de facto his successor as secretary, receiving custody of the signet, whilst James vacillated over filling the post officially. In 1613, he was elevated to the earldom of Somerset and, by December 1613, Somerset in alliance with his future father-in-law, the earl of Suffolk, held sway at court.⁶²

Cuddy thinks that initially Somerset's role was to act as James's broker between the faction of the earls of Northampton and Suffolk and that of Southampton, rather than acting in his own right. If we look at what he was doing in Scotland, however, Somerset seems to have been using his new influence almost immediately. In a letter of 1610, he wrote that James was willing to give Ferniehurst, his brother, the title of Lord Jedburgh and that year, Somerset was granted extensive lands, particularly in Dumfriesshire, from the forfeiture of John, Lord Maxwell. He soon redistributed these to his Ker kinsmen and Ferniehurst received some of these lands in 1612, Somerset referring to these 'helpes' that he had 'procured from the king' for his family.⁶³ Despite his brother's fall from grace in late 1615, Ferniehurst retained James's favour: in 1616, James ordered the Scottish council to dispose of some disputed teinds in Roxburghshire, to Ferniehurst against the wishes of Lord Roxburgh, his old enemy. In 1622, Ferniehurst finally became Lord Jedburgh.⁶⁴

Somerset was also able to engineer offices in both Scotland and England for his kindred. In 1611, his cousin Ker of Ancrum was appointed captain of the border guard. Ancrum was seconded to London in 1613, to serve in Prince Charles's household, almost certainly at the instigation of Somerset, as James was to remind him.⁶⁵ Ancrum nominated his cousin and Somerset's nephew Oxnam to replace him as captain of the border guard. And when, in November 1613, James appointed his favourite treasurer of Scotland, Oxnam too became a councillor. This represented a massive leap in Oxnam's status, from heir-apparent to an impoverished estate, to membership of the highest governing council in the land. Given that Somerset did not attend the council himself, Oxnam's elevation was to represent his uncle's interests there. Oxnam was an assiduous councillor, giving the Ferniehurst and Ancrum Kers a firm foothold within the Scottish government.⁶⁶

⁶¹ *CSP Ven*, xii, pp. 115–16, 135–6; Cuddy, 'Revival of the entourage', p. 208.

⁶² Salisbury had died in May 1612. From July 1612, English ambassadors and foreign dignitaries in Europe addressed their correspondence to Ker. TNA, SP77/10–11, 78/59 fos. 195, 204, 214, 78/60–2, 80/3, 81/12–13, 82/5, 84/68–70, 92/1–3, 94/19–22, 99/10–20; Cuddy, 'Revival of the entourage', pp. 209, 211.

⁶³ NAS, Lothian papers, GD40/2/12, fo. 22. For example, Ker disposed of Maxwellhaugh to James Ker of Overcrailling near Jedburgh. *Registrum Magni Sigill Regum Scotorum* (RMS), ed. J. M. Thomson et al. (11 vols., Edinburgh, 1882–1914), vii, nos. 217, 613, 786; GD40/2/12, fo. 34.

⁶⁴ NAS, Lothian papers, GD40/2/12, fo. 44.

⁶⁵ *Letters of James VI and I*, ed. G. P. V. Akrigg (Berkeley, CA, 1984), p. 340.

⁶⁶ *RPCS*, x, pp. 157, 170, 176, 184, 200; Anna Groundwater, 'The Middle March of the Scottish Borders, 1573 to 1625' (Ph.D. Edinburgh, 2007) app. O.

Somerset's influence brought good fortune to his family with offices, titles, and lands. But more significantly, through the appointment of such as Oxnam to the guard, Ker's patronage can be seen to be facilitating the imposition of crown policy in the Borders. In 1613, Oxnam was also made a commissioner of the Middle Shires and appointed to the conjunct commission in 1618. He remained captain until 1621 when James ruled that the guard's services were no longer needed.⁶⁷ In fulfilling his duties in the Borders, Oxnam utilized his network of kinsmen and affiliates there: in 1616, the lieutenant of the guard was William Ker of Grange and, in 1622, an exoneration for service in the guard was granted to Oxnam's brother William, George Ker apparent of Cavers and William Ker, Ancrum's brother.⁶⁸ Through his councillorship, Oxnam's activities in the Borders were closely linked into the highest levels of Scottish government. Through Somerset's and, subsequently, Ancrum's and Oxnam's influence over the distribution of offices, the crown was able to utilize the Ker kindred in effecting the pacification.

Somerset's network was not limited to the Kers. He was close to Dunbar, a Home, and he was also related to another enthusiastic Middle Shires commissioner, Murray of Elibank. Elibank was connected to the Ferniehirsts through the marriage of his half-sister, Janet Scott to Sir Thomas Ker of Ferniehirst: he was thus an uncle to Ferniehirst and Somerset. Elibank was a key figure as an ally in the Borders and he and Somerset benefited mutually from their relationship. In 1611, Elibank, acting as Ker's agent for his affairs in Scotland, brought a case before the council against the bailie of Caerlaverock, which had been granted to Ker from Maxwell's forfeiture. In 1612, Ker granted the Caerlaverock castle to Elibank's son, Patrick Murray of Langshaw, thus securing Elibank's support on the council and in the Borders.⁶⁹ The same year, Elibank became deputy treasurer of Scotland, as a result of Somerset manoeuvring before his own admittance as treasurer.⁷⁰ Elibank embodied the linkage between the Borders and the Scottish council – and through Somerset, with James at court.

Elibank's power in the Borders was not only based upon his offices and jurisdiction. His influence spread through his close familial links with the Scott kindred, in particular Lord Buccleuch, and the powerful Murrays of Blackbarony and Philiphaugh. In 1606, at Buccleuch's 'earnest sute', Elibank attempted to intervene in a case against one of the Scott surname, 'on promissis of [Buccleuch's] grit offices in the advancement' of the pacification. It was a mutually beneficial relationship: in 1608, Buccleuch agreed to a tack of the teinds of Hawick to Elibank. After Elibank's elevation to the council, he could help the Scotts at the highest level: in 1616, he secured a pardon from James for John Scott of Tushielaw for the slaughter of another Scott.⁷¹ The close connection between

⁶⁷ *RPCS*, x, p. 164, xi, pp. 344–8, xii, pp. 582–4, 657–60.

⁶⁸ *RPCS*, xi, p. 217, xii, pp. 658–9. ⁶⁹ *RPCS*, ix, p. 232; *RMS*, vii, nos. 636, 754.

⁷⁰ *RPCS*, x, p. vii.

⁷¹ *RPCS*, vii, pp. 714–17; NAS, Lothian, GD32/20/19, GD224/918/27, fos. 4, 5.

the council's direction of the pacification and the Buccleuch's involvement continued after Elibank's death in 1621. The second Lord Buccleuch was a councillor too, and he was also related to another councillor, Ker of Oxnam. From 1622 Buccleuch held additional jurisdiction in the Borders through his appointment as a triumvir, in which he was able to use his extensive Scott kindred. After 1603, government of the Borders was directly connected through the Ferniehirst–Elibank–Buccleuch patronage networks from London to the wilds of the Buccleuch-owned Liddesdale.

This network was potentially damaged by Somerset's downfall in 1615. These families were, however, fortunate to have another kinsman to look after their interests at court, Robert Ker of Ancrum, from 1613 a gentleman in Prince Charles's household. Elibank's family, the Murrays of Blackbarony, were further linked into the Ferniehirst–Ancrum alliance by the marriage of Elibank's neice, Elizabeth, to Ancrum, and, in 1608, Blackbarony managed his affairs in his absence. Ancrum attended Charles for many years, surviving the depletion of Scotsmen in the king's bedchamber after Charles's accession as king.⁷² Ancrum no doubt played some part in preserving the Kers' fortunes after Somerset's fall, though, in early 1616, he was temporarily held as part of the investigations into the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury in which Somerset was implicated.⁷³ But until Charles's imprisonment, when Ancrum was forced to flee into penurious exile in Amsterdam, he remained an influential point of contact between the royal court and the Scottish borderers in his alliance.

Ancrum's longevity of service, and intimacy of access to James's heir, gave him significant influence. As Charles put it, when writing to the countess of Derby, 'what he wants in meanes he hath in neerness about my person'.⁷⁴ In 1619, Ancrum's authority was increased following his appointment to Charles's Scottish council. For anyone wanting something done in Scotland, Ancrum could intervene. For instance, when Elibank died, Ancrum was beseeched by several, including the earl of Lauderdale, to support their applications to Charles for the late treasurer's office. Indeed, in 1623, Roxburgh was forced to write to Ancrum, the son of the man he had killed in 1590, asking him to assure Charles of his 'treu haert'.⁷⁵ And helpfully, for government in the Borders, Ancrum maintained his close familial connections, returning occasionally, and maintaining a frequent correspondence. Ancrum's own family was employed in the pacification: his younger brother William served on his cousin Ker of Oxnam's border guard; his wife's uncle Elibank, one of its prime motivators. Thus the Ker kindred, and their allies amongst the Murrays of Blackbarony, and the Scotts of Buccleuch, were

⁷² NAS, Lothian papers, GD40/2/13, fo. 1. Details of Ancrum's career, and some of his correspondence, are in *Correspondence of Sir Robert Ker, first earl of Ancrum and his son William, third earl of Lothian*, ed. D. Laing (Edinburgh, 1875); the original letters are in GD40/2/13.

⁷³ Chamberlain, *Letters*, I, p. 625.

⁷⁴ NAS, Lothian papers, GD40/2/19/1, fo. 8.

⁷⁵ *RPCS*, xii, pp. 59–60; NAS, Lothian papers, GD40/2/13, fo. 28, 40/9/8, fo. 1.

intimately involved in the communication and execution of James's policies in the Borders.⁷⁶

Ancrum's service brought financial and social rewards: in 1617, he was granted an annuity of £300 from the great customs, which he did not surrender until 1637. In 1630, he had a warrant for the reversion of the keepership of Marylebone Park.⁷⁷ Such grants enriched his life at court, and enabled him to develop his family's properties near Jedburgh. He was subsequently created the earl of Ancrum, and was able to manipulate his son's marriage, in the 1620s, to the Ker heiress of the second earl of Lothian and the absorption of the Lothian title and lands into the Ancrums' hands. Despite his success in England, however, it seems, as Brown observes generally of Scottish courtiers, that Ancrum maintained his Scottish lands, resisting the integration of his family into English society.⁷⁸

Another Border courtier, John Murray of Lochmaben from Dumfriesshire, was also able to facilitate government there. He was part of an extensive network which included the Griersons of Lag and the Douglasses of Drumlanrig in the western Scottish Borders. From 1609, he was a groom of James's bedchamber and a gentleman from 1622, when he was created earl of Annandale. He was granted lands in Cumberland in 1609, and a property in Guildford, Surrey. In 1620, he was granted the 'fee farm of Gilforde Parke, one of the finest grounds they say in England and of good value'.⁷⁹ In 1622, Lochmaben's Borders connections were underlined by his commission as triumvir, despite his lack of such experience. It was not a successful appointment, given Annandale's commitments in London. Nor was he a major landholder in the region and therefore lacked the authority associated with land and adherents. But he was still an important link between the Borders and James in the direction of the pacification. Annandale was in London in August 1623, when a dispute fell out over jurisdiction between Robert Maxwell, the bumptious new earl of Nithsdale and Douglas of Drumlanrig – both Oxnam and Nithsdale wrote begging Annandale for his support.⁸⁰ In 1624, James noting Ancrum's 'personall service attending ourselfe' appointed instead Lord Yester and Sir John Stewart of Traquair from Peeblesshire.⁸¹ James clearly felt Annandale was more useful to him at court, facilitating the communication of policy from the king to powerful officials in the Borders, who were better placed to carry out such directives.

In London, however, there was little to question Annandale's influence: his intimate access to James and his keepership of the privy purse made him a powerful figure. Senior English councillors and courtiers were careful to maintain good relations with him, Chamberlain observing that Lochmaben 'always held very great correspondency with the Secretary [Salisbury], and ... got many a

⁷⁶ Ibid., GD40/2/13, fos. 6, 12, 29.

⁷⁷ TNA, E214/641; British Library (BL), Eg. 2553, fo. 82.

⁷⁸ Brown, 'Scottish aristocracy', pp. 550, 564, 574–6.

⁷⁹ TNA, E214/701, E134/7Jas1/Hil13, E134/8Jas1/East18; NLS, Denmilne, Adv. MS 31.1.7, vol. 22, fo. 38; Chamberlain, *Letters*, II, pp. 318, 412.

⁸⁰ NLS, Denmilne, Adv. MS 31.1.1, vol. 10, fos. 112, 135.

⁸¹ *RPC*, XIII, pp. 542–3.

thousand pound by his assignment'.⁸² In 1614, Sir Francis Bacon wrote to Lochmaben referring to his keepership of the seal, assuring Lochmaben of his support, and noting that 'Mr Secretary ... is your frend and constant'.⁸³ Other councillors used Lochmaben to communicate official business to James: the earl of Suffolk wrote of his meeting with the chancellor to settle the king's business, asking Lochmaben to 'acquayant his Majestie with thus much'. The strength of Annandale's position was demonstrated further in 1623, by the duke of Buckingham's cultivation of him as a conduit to James during their abortive Spanish escapade; Buckingham thanked him for his 'constant kindness', declaring himself Annandale's 'faithful frend and servant'. Buckingham also linked Annandale into his own familial network, in 1620, persuading him to allow his son to marry the daughter of Buckingham's brother-in-law, Lord Denbigh.⁸⁴

Annandale's influence was such that a number of senior Scottish councillors, including Elibank, the chancellor Dunfermline, and the earl of Melrose, maintained a regular correspondence with him. This kept James well informed of events and concerns in Scotland, whilst councillors thanked Annandale 'for letting me know his Majesty's mind'. Dunfermline was careful to assure Lochmaben, 'always I wish yow [to] know all the guid offices yow doe to me, are done to a freind, to ane kinnisman'.⁸⁵ Their language demonstrated that Dunfermline and Elibank, despite their elevated positions, were very much the supplicants with Lochmaben. Scottish councillors needed to sustain good relationships with those commanding access to James. This was particularly true following the disgrace of Elibank's and Oxnam's principal contact, Somerset, in the winter of 1615. Elibank beseeched Lochmaben to speak on Oxnam's behalf with James, since Oxnam's enemies would not fail 'to seik his harme and skaithe at this tyme when he hes not my Lord Somerset to stand for him'.⁸⁶ Elibank, also vulnerable, wrote a deeply thankful letter to James in 1615 for his 'extraordinarie' favours, despite the 'ruyne of my unhappie kinsman'. Similarly in 1616, Elibank, worrying over his two-year absence from court, asked Lochmaben to intercede with James against some evil reports of him.⁸⁷ He also asked Lochmaben to protect the grants that he, Elibank, had made in Scotland on behalf of their relatives, such as the office of comptroller of the ordinance that Elibank had given to his nephew, James Murray.⁸⁸

This channelling of favour operated in both directions. Dunfermline, acknowledging Lochmaben's help, wrote that he would not 'prove unthankfull, as it

⁸² Cuddy, 'Revival of the entourage', p. 198. He was keeper of the privy purse to at least 1625. BL, Add. 35832, fo. 153.

⁸³ Bacon is almost certainly referring to Somerset here. NLS, Denmilne, Adv. MS 33.1.7, vol. 22, fo. 15; Chamberlain, *Letters*, 1, p. 521. Bacon and Lochmaben corresponded from at least 1607 to 1615. NLS, Denmilne, Adv. MS 33.1.7, vol. 22, fos. 7, 8, 13, 17; BL, Sloane 3078, fo. 51b; BL, Add. 4106, fos. 95, 96, 96b, 98b.

⁸⁴ NLS, Denmilne, Adv. MS 33.1.7, vol. 22, fos. 23, 83, 86; Brown, 'Scottish aristocracy', p. 572.

⁸⁵ NLS, Denmilne, Adv. MS 33.1.1, vol. 5, fos. 45, 47, 48, 103.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. 6, fos. 51, 52.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 6, fo. 57, vol. 7, fo. 2.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, fos. 9, 32.

may pleis yow [to] employ me', whilst Lochmaben had Melrose to thank for defending his interests in Scotland, particularly with the earl of Nithsdale. Melrose also intervened to publicize Annandale's commission to the triumvirate of the Middle Shires when his deputies there 'found no obedience', Nithsdale writing to Annandale that it was impossible to 'oversie the particulers of your Lordships cuntrie bussines heir, except you appoynt sum man or other to wrak over your offisers'. Scottish courtiers in London were as dependent on their kinsmen and allies to maintain their interests in their absence at home, as their clients needed representation at court.⁸⁹ James too needed the communication lines that these patronage networks provided, to transmit policy to the Borders, but also to keep himself advised of Scottish events. In 1614, Lochmaben enquired of Dunfermline, 'What yee wald have hes majestie doe in [resolving the dispute between Lord Sanquahr and Douglas of Drumlanrig] ... let me knowe.'⁹⁰ Around 1615, James wrote asking for an account of what happened between the earl of Home and the archbishop when Home was confined, which a gossip Elibank was happy to supply.⁹¹ In return, James was keen to let his Scottish councillors know the news from England: as Lochmaben explained to Dunfermline in 1615, 'I have wreittin these lynnes to yr honor by his majesties drectione to lett yow understand' the circumstances of the king of Denmark's visit.⁹² Failure to 'keep open such lines of communication and patronage', as Elliott notes of Philip IV of Spain and Charles I, was disastrous: in doing so 'they had deprived themselves of the local knowledge required to save them from egregious mistakes of execution'.⁹³ James VI and I was cannier than that.

IV

It is clear that lines of communication were regularly and effectively used, from the court in London, through the Scottish council, to the landed elite in the Scottish Borders – and from there to London. These routes could be used to disseminate crown policies, distribute patronage and staff offices at both national and regional levels, and, conversely, they provided a conduit through which the concerns of prominent local figures, and their advice, could be presented to James. In this way they replicated the function of the councils of 'native councillors attendant on the [Spanish] king ... providing a forum in which local opinions and grievances could be voiced at court, and local knowledge could be used in the determination of policy'.⁹⁴

In 1613, the Scottish dominance within the royal households was at its zenith. Chamberlain moaned that 'nothing of any moment is don here but by [Somerset's] mediation, and sure yt is a marvaylous straunge fact that three

⁸⁹ Ibid., vol. 5, fos. 103, 139, 141, vol. 10, fo. 111.

⁹¹ NLS, Denmilne, Adv. MS 33.3.12, vol. 15, fo. 30.

⁹² NLS, Denmilne, Adv. MS 33.1.1, vol. 5, fo. 50.

⁹³ Elliott, 'A Europe of composite monarchies', p. 64.

⁹⁰ Ibid., fo. 50.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 55.

Roberts of the same surname shold be so greate and powerfull, about the King, Quene and Prince, all [at] one time', that is the Kers of Somerset, Roxburgh, and Ancrum.⁹⁵ These Scottish courtiers, as the focus of patronage networks which radiated out into the Scottish Borders, helped to maintain the crown's working relationship with the elite there. The pyramidal structure of such networks meant that as they widened, these courtiers also became the focus of other networks which included non-related Scottish councillors, such as the chancellor Dunfermline, and thence through his own personal connections amongst the Seton kindred and the Montgomerie earls of Eglinton to other Scottish regions.⁹⁶

The effectiveness of these links was rooted in these courtiers' intimate access to James: for those left out of such networks, this meant that it was much harder to ask the king anything. Given that these patronage networks were helping to maintain co-operative relations between James and his provincial elites, James ran the risk of alienating those not included within them. The xenophobic speeches of John Holles in 1610, and John Hoskins, in 1614, indicated English fears over the Scottish monopoly of James's attention.⁹⁷ Similar concerns over contact engendered the complaints of the disgruntled Edinburgh burgesses, which were exacerbated by the huge costs of sending representatives south to James; a cost which would have been minimized by having a permanent ally resident in Whitehall. Further work is needed now on the effects of the alienation of those excluded from the benefits of such channels; for those such as the laird of Skelmurlie whose chances against Dunfermline's nephew, Eglinton, were undermined by the chancellor's request to Lochmaben that James be reminded Skelmurlie was 'ane kittill, mutinous and onsatled man, full off consaittis, readie to rase' trouble; or the earl of Angus writing dolorously of the 'want of your maiesteis gracious presence, be[ing] unto me ane just caus of exceiding greiff and sorrow'.⁹⁸ It was not only those excluded that lost out. The reciprocity of patron-client relationships, from king down to regional elites, meant that any blockage in the conduits of information, obligation, and co-operation was potentially harmful to the king too. Whilst the Scottish dominance of the bed-chamber under James probably maintained sufficient correspondence between Whitehall and Scotland, their diminished presence under Charles, and the increasingly formalized access that Charles insisted upon, was to damage these lines of communication.

For the pacification of the Scottish Borders, however, the lines were very much open: the connections between Somerset, Lochmaben, and Ancrum and their allies in the Borders formed a crucial component within James's governance of his newly unified kingdoms. By 1611, the pacification was deemed a success in terms of the suppression of cross-border crime, though internal crime (itself reduced) in

⁹⁵ Chamberlain, *Letters*, I, p. 510.

⁹⁶ NLS, Denmilne, Adv. MS 33.1.1, vol. 5, fos. 67, 99, 103.

⁹⁷ HMC *Portland*, IX, p. 113; Chamberlain, *Letters*, I, p. 538.

⁹⁸ NLS, Denmilne, Adv. MS, 33.1.1, vol. 1, fo. 5, vol. 5, fo. 48.

the Borders continued to draw official condemnation. In many ways it replicated the successful pacification of the Welsh marches under Henry VIII, achieved through the well-rewarded co-operation of the Welsh gentry. The pacification was less successful, however, in terms of the symbolism it had been intended to provide of harmonious cross-border co-operation. Disputatious relations between the commissioners on each side of the border, and enduring administrative and judicial divisions within the composite Middle Shires, continued to exemplify the tensions within the young multiple monarchy at its very heart.

Despite these tensions, the connections between the Kers and their allies nevertheless show how networks of patronage could act as a cohesive force within the new 'Britain'. That these Borderers continued to attract the favour of a king with so many new diversions says something for the strength of ties that could be fostered. By imposing English viceroys in the Irish pale, both Tudor and Stuart kings denied themselves the benefits of such networks. In Scotland, the use of patron-client relationships to effect government was a long-standing tradition, drawing on alliances which harked back to the mid-sixteenth century. The integration that these could foster was also of use to James in the new 'Britain', patronage systems extending relatively easily to encompass the realities of a king now living 400 miles to the south. Such networks helped to hold together the loosely unified kingdoms, united only in the body of their king.